

have seen what has happened to manufacturing jobs in Ohio. Ohio is still the largest manufacturing State in the country, below only Texas, twice our size, and California, three times our size. We still put out a lot of production. There is a lot of productive capacity in Ohio and a lot of production. But 30 years ago, 26, 27 percent of our GDP was manufacturing and about 10 percent was financial services. Those manufacturing jobs created wealth for a lot of middle-class families. Kids could go to college, they could buy a home or a car or two in so many cases. Today what used to be more than a quarter of our GDP in manufacturing and only 10 percent in financial services has flipped so today only about 10 percent of our GDP is manufacturing.

We know what that has done. Yet some of my Senate colleagues do not want to extend the payroll tax. In many ways, it seems they will essentially will go on strike to prevent the wealthiest in America from paying a penny more. I hope that changes now that we are back from the August break and we are listening to what voters, what citizens at home are talking about.

Mr. President, let me share a couple of letters from people in Ohio, a couple of stories. Then I know Senator DURBIN wants to address the Senate.

Last April, I met with workers at Navistar in Springfield, OH, who are building next-generation military and commercial vehicles. The plant's production is up because a company and a community came together, forging compromise between the union and employer to keep jobs and increase production. We see it across Ohio. At the other end of our State, at Arcelor Mittal's plant—a big steel maker near Cleveland—for every 1 person-hour, 1 ton of steel is produced. To my understanding, we have never seen that kind of productivity anywhere else in the world. They are the most productive steelworkers in the world, able to produce 1 ton of steel for 1 man-hour, 1 woman-hour invested. We see it at the Lima Tank Plant and at the GE Aviation Plant in Evendale. It is a story we see down in Piketon. We see it in towns across Ohio, where the "Made in Ohio" or "Made in America" is stamped on everything from airplanes to auto parts.

I got a letter from David from Akron. He said:

I am a firefighter/paramedic for the city of Akron. For 11 years I have put the safety and well-being of my community above mine.

I am a proud member of my local union, I am married to a high school English teacher. When I took the job I was told my life expectancy would be 10 years less than that of the average man. As a paramedic I do my job all hours of the night, all days of the week, 24 hours at a time. I miss birthdays, holidays, celebrations and much more. I have never complained until now.

As our country tries to recover from very hard times, I understand there is a need for reform. It is easy to think about what someone else has and how it is not fair. My wife and I worked hard to get where we are. No

one has handed it to us. That is what I love about our country, if you are willing to work for something then you can be successful.

Public employees are once again asked to make sacrifices.

He is not arguing he will not make sacrifices. But to attack public employees with all that has happened in Ohio, to imply that they are not doing their jobs, they are all slackers, is too much for people who have given so much of their lives serving the public.

This last letter I will read is from Anestis from Canton, OH, a teacher.

My father was a teacher in Canton City schools from 1953 to 1989. He and my mother raised 6 children, of whom I am the youngest. He taught and coached three sports from the time he received his job until he retired. He went to school on the GI bill after World War II. He could have earned a degree in anything, but he chose teaching because he sincerely wanted to earn a living through the hard, honest work of teaching and helping children.

Both of my grandparents were Greek immigrants who came to this country in 1913 and 1920 through Ellis Island to escape the suppression in their counties and better their lives. My grandfathers worked in the factories in Canton so their children could have an education and better their lives.

I have been teaching for 17 years. My father went on strike in the 1970's so we can now have collective bargaining, and I wouldn't be here today [if it were not for that]. Their work ethic and values of fair play helped my parents raise their children on a teacher's salary. If our rights are taken away, I cannot raise my own family—or educate our children.

Going the next step, a number of teachers and a number of college students have told me they are watching some young teachers, they are watching some of their classmates who planned to become teachers or just started their careers in the classroom and they are having second thoughts when they see conservative elected officials attack their profession of public schoolteachers or attack the profession of firefighters or police officers, all because they have a radical political agenda that wants to end the practice of organizing and bargaining collectively. It is a disservice to our country. We know we have a middle class because large numbers of workers—mostly private sector, some public sector—have had the ability under law to organize and bargain collectively. That is what built the middle class. It is not something we should give up lightly.

That is what I heard all over Ohio in the last couple of months. I assume I will hear it for the next couple of months. It is so important to our country that the focus here be on jobs, the focus here be on living-wage jobs, the focus here be on giving opportunities so Americans can stay in the middle class or have the opportunity to join the middle class.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

NO POLITICS ZONE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Ohio for high-

lighting what has to be our focal point as we return to the Senate, and that is the unemployment picture across America and the desperate situation many families are facing. As I visited my home State of Illinois, I found what the Senator did in Ohio, that many people have been desperately trying to find jobs for a long time and it is becoming increasingly difficult. The longer it goes on, the more difficult it becomes. It turns out the national statistics, which I read over the weekend, suggest that it is primarily males who are out of work—not exclusively, but 60 percent males, 40 percent females—and more and more not in minority populations. They are having a difficult time. I am glad the Senator from Ohio focused on getting us back on track as we should be on this issue.

I read with interest when Republican Leader MCCONNELL wrote an opinion article in the Washington Post yesterday. One line in that article struck me particularly and I wish to read it. Senator MCCONNELL said, "Job creation should be a no-politics zone."

I would like that to become our slogan for the month of September. I hope both parties will live by it. If we do, I think we can achieve some things and surprise the American people who have just about given up on us. Take a look at the numbers across the board. They say 12 or 13 percent of the American people think favorably of Congress. As I said on the "Jon Stewart Daily Show," I don't think we have that many relatives so I question the number. I think it has reached the point that most people do not have a positive view of what we are doing here, and we need to change it. The only people who can change it are those of us who serve in this Chamber.

Unfortunately, the Republican leader came to the floor of the Senate today and said a little different thing, which I hope I am not overreading, but he said:

Mr. President, there is a much simpler reason for opposing your economic proposals that has nothing whatsoever to do with politics, and it's this: They don't work.

I think that could be read to suggest that whatever the President has to say, he is going to run into opposition. I hope the joint session of Congress is productive. I spoke to the President this afternoon. He called a number of Members. He didn't give me any inside story on what he is about to say, but my guess is he is going to make proposals and then say to the Republicans: Now come up with your proposals and let's sit down together and work them out between us. That is the right way to do it in a divided government and that is the way we should approach it.

I recall when President George W. Bush in 2008 felt we needed an economic stimulus. At that time unemployment was 4.8 percent. Senator MCCONNELL supported an economic stimulus by President George W. Bush when our unemployment rate was 4.8 percent. He actually said on the floor

today that, "Businesses actually don't want shots in the arm or quick fixes." But when he was supporting President Bush's economic stimulus in 2008, it was called "a booster shot for our economy." I think sometimes that kind of booster shot can make a difference.

I think there are two vital elements in our economy that challenge us. I don't know how much we can change them or how quickly we change them. As I visited in my home State with community bankers who actually loan mortgages in their communities, time and again they said to me the biggest single problem is we don't know where the bottom is. We don't know where fair market value is on real estate so as a result it is very tough to close a deal and very tough to get agencies such as Fannie and Freddie to go along with it because of disputes over appraisals.

The second issue was one highlighted this morning in today's Chicago Sun-Times and that is the spending and saving habits of the American family, and they are changing pretty substantially. The rate of savings is up from 1 percent to 5 percent. People have decided putting some money in the bank is not a bad idea and they are borrowing less on their credit cards and other things and making fewer purchases. That is the right thing for a family to do in an uncertain economy. It is not the best thing for an economic recession. In fact, just the opposite is true. But you can understand, people were burned in 2007; burned again in the stock market a few weeks ago. They don't want to see it happen again and they don't want to be victimized by it, so those two things haunt us.

More than anything, I hope in the month of September this does not become a month of confrontation on the floor of the Senate and the House. The American people are fed up with it. If we have a confrontation over extending the Federal Aviation Administration or extending the Federal highway bill, they will rightly be angry that we are back to our old tricks of staring one another down and not accomplishing what needs to be done for this Nation and this economy.

I urge my colleagues, I hope I can join in this, to look for what the Republican leader called job creation as a "no-politics zone" in the weeks ahead.

In August, the American economy added zero net new jobs. That was painful. The private sector added just 17,000 jobs. Unemployment is at 9.1 percent. Fourteen million Americans are unemployed and millions more are underemployed. GDP growth was just 1 percent in the second quarter of this year.

Year-over-year real GDP growth is now at 1.5 percent. Since 1948, every time the four-quarter change in GDP has fallen below 2 percent, the economy has entered a recession. These figures are stunning and worrying. Now is not the time for us to shrink from our responsibilities on a bipartisan basis. The President is going to lay out a job

creation proposal this week. He will offer a plan that should have broad bipartisan support, as these initiatives have had in the past when suggested by other Presidents. I hope this President will call for investments in America, in physical, human, and intellectual capital to provide the seed money for long-term growth. Among other things, that means investing in our infrastructure.

Mr. President, you know what is going on in China today. We have seen it. The infrastructure construction in China is mind boggling. They are preparing for the 21st century. America is not, and we need to change that. The American Society of Civil Engineers estimates our country's infrastructure needs at least \$1 trillion. Our infrastructure is rapidly aging, whether bridges falling down in Minnesota or planes being diverted from airports because they are not up to where they ought to be. This is what ought to challenge all of us. Dozens of bipartisan commissions have told us to invest in infrastructure. We also need to invest in human and intellectual capital. That means jobs for teachers and job trainers, and research jobs which will create good jobs across the whole economy.

Congress must invest now because the private sector remains skittish. Here is what Bill Gross, a Republican and chief investment officer of the giant bond fund PIMCO, said:

Capitalism in its raw form can't pull us out of this hole.

That is an important message from a man in the private sector, in the financial community. In the near term, the private sector is not uneasy because of high taxes or government debt or the Environmental Protection Agency or even health care reform or Wall Street reform. These things all exist. But corporations are doing better than ever. A recent report found that of the last year's 100 highest paid corporate executives in the United States, 25 of the 100 highest paid CEOs in America earned more in income than their company paid in taxes to the Federal Government. Corporate profits grew 8.3 percent year over year in the second quarter. That growth is far better than the overall growth of our economy in the same timeframe.

As of March 31, the blue-chip companies and Standard and Poor's 500 index are sitting on nearly \$1 trillion in cash. It is not government debt, it is not the EPA, it is not health care reform, it is not Wall Street reform. No, the private sector in America is still on the sidelines because it is still recovering from the wounds of the deepest global crisis in over 75 years. While the private sector is licking its wounds, the government can promote job creation and reduce uncertainty. It is a false choice to say government can either create jobs or reduce debt. The truth is, creating jobs will reduce debt, and the argument can be made with 14 million Americans out of work you will never balance the budget. Creating jobs will bring more

people into the tax base, increasing our revenues and take people off of the safety net programs such as unemployment insurance and food stamps. We need more jobs and less debt. One begets the other. It is possible. I know many pundits listening now will say: Impossible. We can't get bipartisan agreement on job measures now. But short-term spending coupled with long-term spending had bipartisan support less than a year ago. That is when I was a member of the Simpson-Bowles Commission, voted for their findings, and that is what they recommended. The Commission said: Don't cut back on spending for 2 years, until we get out of the recession, and then make a serious commitment to deficit reduction. I think they had it right then. They still do.

The Commission explicitly called for near-term spending, a payroll tax credit in concert with long-term deficit reduction. Mr. President, 11 of the 18 members of that Commission, myself included, voted for it: 5 Democrats, 5 Republicans, 1 Independent. By supporting progrowth policies and locking in deficit reduction in the outyears, we can turn this economy around, provide certainty in the marketplace, and create good-paying jobs right here in America.

One last point I would like to make. Illinois was largely spared from the disasters of the last several weeks. We had our problems with flooding earlier this year. But 2011 is shaping up to be a record year with regard to disasters. Hurricane Irene could cost us at least \$1 billion, maybe \$1.5 billion. People in Illinois have been recovering from two federally declared disasters over the long term—one, a blizzard in February, and the other, major flooding in the spring.

Out of the \$130 billion provided in FEMA disaster funds in the past decade, some \$110 billion has been provided as emergency funding. We cannot budget for these disasters.

At a hearing before we left—and I knew government experts would be suspect to some, so I brought in experts from the insurance industry, the people who write property and casualty insurance. They said: Be prepared—more disasters and higher costs in loss than ever before. That was before Hurricane Irene.

According to NOAA's National Climate Data Center, the United States has already experienced 10 natural disasters with damages totaling more than \$1 billion. The previous record for weather-related disasters of this magnitude was nine in 1 year. We have already broken it, and there are more hurricanes to follow, I am afraid to say. The United States has sustained 109 weather-related disasters over the past 31 years in which overall damage or costs exceeded \$1 billion. The total normalized losses for the 109 events exceeded \$750 billion.

In 2011 alone, over \$35 billion in damages has been caused by catastrophic

events. I make that point because some Members of Congress—one, a Congressman from Virginia—suggest we can take the need for disaster funds out of the regular budget of the United States. I will tell you, it is virtually impossible, and we don't know what the final cost will be. At this point we expect it to be much more. We have to deal with these disasters and come to the aid of families and businesses, communities and States, as our State has been aided and almost every State has in the past.

A provision in the Budget Control Act allows Congress several billion dollars in emergency spending for additional FEMA aid without budget cuts elsewhere. We are going to have to get together on a bipartisan basis to deal with this. FEMA estimates that the request leaves the disaster fund short by \$2 billion to \$4.8 billion in the upcoming year. These figures do not take into account the most recent damage from Hurricane Irene, particularly in the State of Vermont and many other places. We need to work on a bipartisan basis to meet these needs for the disaster assistance all across America and put America back to work.

At this point I would like to yield the floor to my former remarks and engage in the closing script.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

PETTY OFFICER TUMILSON

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, as an Iowan, it is with great sadness but also a sense of pride that I rise to pay tribute to Navy SEAL Jon T. Tumilson who gave his life for his country along with 29 other American heroes as the result of a helicopter crash in Afghanistan on August 6. He worked hard to get where he did and was extremely proud to have become a Navy SEAL. The people of the State of Iowa, and particularly his hometown of Rockford, are extremely proud to call him a native son.

Petty Officer Tumilson is described as someone who committed fully to everything he did and he applied that intense dedication to serving his country. We as a nation must be grateful that we have brave and selfless Americans like Jon Tumilson who are willing to undertake the incredible training necessary to become a Navy SEAL so that they can then put their lives on the line repeatedly in some of the most dangerous missions imaginable. Our country has lost a powerful force for good, and his fellow sailors have lost a brother in arms. Of course, his loss will be felt particularly deeply by his family, friends, and neighbors. My prayers go out to Jon's parents, George and

Kathy, and all those who are grieving. Nothing can compensate for his loss, but I hope they can take comfort in knowing that he died a true American hero. Jon Tumilson's memory will now join the honored ranks of those patriots who, since the Revolutionary War, have fought to defend American liberty.

CHIEF PETTY OFFICER ROBERT REEVES

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a true American hero. On August 5, 2011, our State and Nation lost a great patriot when Navy SEAL CPO Robert Reeves, aged 32, died in Afghanistan during combat operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Chief Reeves was raised in Louisiana by his loving parents Jo and James Reeves, and he graduated from Caddo Magnet High School in Shreveport, LA, where he played both soccer and lacrosse.

After 1 year at LSU, Chief Reeves enlisted in the U.S. Navy and joined the SEALs in 1999. Since that time, he has been assigned to various SEAL teams where he made several combat deployments in support of the global war on terror, distinguishing himself in combat operations during 13 years of service in the U.S. Navy.

A decorated soldier, he served as a member of the Naval Special Warfare Development Group, or SEAL Team Six as it is more commonly known, and was the recipient of four Bronze Stars—earned for his bravery and meritorious service. He carried out his duties with pride and without reservation and each of us owes him our gratitude for his selfless sacrifice.

There is no doubt that this tragic loss will not only be felt within the Reeves family but also the Navy and the entire Nation. My deepest thoughts and prayers are with his family during this extraordinarily difficult time. Our Nation is safer and stronger because of brave heroes like Chief Reeves. Today, I ask my colleagues to join me as we honor the life of Navy SEAL CPO Robert Reeves and his legacy, as well as all the other brave men and women in our Armed Forces who have given the ultimate sacrifice in service to our great Nation.

CORDRAY NOMINATION

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I rise to speak in favor of Rich Cordray's nomination as Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and to urge a vote on his nomination.

The enactment of the Dodd-Frank law last Congress is a triumph for consumers. This landmark law reins in the abusive and predatory practices of bad actors in the financial industry and protects consumers through the creation of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

The CFPB will empower consumers by giving them the knowledge and tools they need to make responsible financial decisions and will level the playing field by policing and curtailing the unfair practices of some unscrupu-

lous banks and financial institutions. I applauded the creation of the CFPB and have heard from Connecticut residents who want the consumer protections that the CFPB will provide.

Last month, President Obama nominated former Ohio attorney general Rich Cordray to serve as the Director of the CFPB. This is an inspired choice. Rich has dedicated his career to protecting and educating consumers: he has vigorously pursued lenders that employed abusive and fraudulent foreclosure practices like robo-signing and he has repeatedly gone after financial institutions that weakened employees' pension funds by concealing material information from investors.

Recognizing that informed consumers are empowered consumers, Rich has also sought to improve financial literacy among Ohio residents by working to include personal finance education in Ohio schools.

Rich's nomination has been widely praised, even by those he has clashed with. Former Senator Mike DeWine, who ran against Rich for State attorney general last year, called Rich "very well-qualified for this job."

As Connecticut's attorney general, I worked alongside Rich, and I know he is a true consumer advocate and an outstanding nominee to lead this critical new agency.

Despite Rich's impressive background and qualifications, some of my colleagues are refusing to allow a confirmation vote on his nomination. They do this not because they doubt Rich's qualifications, but because they resent the agency he has been nominated to lead. Earlier this year, 44 Senators wrote President Obama and threatened to block any nominee for the CFPB until the agency's structure and authority was gutted. Now, they are following through on that threat.

This is a bad precedent. The CFPB was created by the Dodd-Frank law passed by the previous Congress and signed by President Obama. This legislation was not rushed through; it was debated for months and months, with members given plenty of time to criticize the bill, offer amendments, or vote no on the legislation. Eventually, the bill passed. Sixty Senators voted for it, including several who are now seeking to block the nominee for an agency they voted to create.

Some of my colleagues may not like the law or the CFPB. I respect that. But their course of action should be to introduce legislation to change the law, not to shirk their constitutional duty by refusing to allow a confirmation vote.

REMEMBERING DR. BERNADINE PATRICIA HEALY

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the life of Dr. Bernadine Patricia Healy. Dr. Healy was a cardiologist and a pioneer in the